Carangas—
Chipaya

/394 cont./

directly with my informants was a constant source of difficulties and misunderstandings for me. The chief obstacle which I had to surmount, however, was of a psychological nature: the strength of inertia and the mental laziness of the Čipaya. They offer a deaf resistance to the investigator, composed both of indifference and obstinacy, which the handsomest gifts cannot conquer.

Evenings in their round huts, they are not accustomed to gather together to narrate stories, as do the natives of Chaco. As soon as their last meal has been taken, they roll themselves in their blankets, extinguish their wretched fire of taquia (dried excrement), and sleep heavily until morn. During the festivals they drink, pray, and chew their coca, but never succumb to the joys of conversation.

When I began my investigation of tales and myths, I received the unanimous response that no one in the village had known any for a long time. I was conducted to a blind, paralytic old man, the oldest man of the tribe, who recited the myth of the origin of the Čipaya to me, which I have transcribed below. All the efforts I subsequently made to draw other tales out of him collided with his ignorance, which I believe to have been real.

The few tales which I was able to note down were practically all dictated to me by the corregidor of Chipaya, a young man about 20 years old who, with another inhabitant of the village, had gone voluntarily to present himself at Oruro to do his military service there. He had come back with a few vague rudiments of Spanish, comical manners, and a high /395/ opinion of his ability and of himself. He was my best informant. I was not able to find out if the tales he dictated to me were previously known to him, or if he had gone to ask his father for them to win the large premium I had promised to those who would come and tell stories about men or animals to me. As will be realized these tales are very disjointed and incoherent and constitute reminiscences of episodes rather than continuous narratives. They are ancient Andean myths which have passed to the level of diverting anecdotes. I do not